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The situation in the Middle East

Consequences of the Iraqi occupation of and aggression against Kuwait

Security Council
Fifty-eighth year

Letter dated 3 March 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Bahrain to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have pleasure in enclosing the Final Declaration of the fifteenth regular session of the Council of the League of Arab States, meeting at the summit level, which was held under the chairmanship of the Kingdom of Bahrain at Sharm al-Sheikh, Arab Republic of Egypt, on 1 March 2003 (see annex).

I would appreciate your issuing it as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 36 and 49, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Tawfeeq Ahmed **Almansoor**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 3 March 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Bahrain to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Arabic]

Declaration on the outcome of the work of the fifteenth regular session of the Council of the League of Arab States meeting at the summit level at Sharm el-Sheikh, Arab Republic of Egypt, on 1 March 2003

The Council of the League of Arab States, meeting at the summit level at its fifteenth regular session, under the chairmanship of His Royal Highness, Hamad Bin Isa Al-Khalifa, King of Bahrain, considered the following questions:

- The serious threats to Iraq and the dangers to the Arab States, the possibility that the situation might lead to a military conflict and the grave repercussions that this would have for the region and for the security of the Arab nation;
- The situation between Iraq and Kuwait;
- The Arab-Israeli conflict, the evolution of the Palestinian question, intensified Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people and its impact on peace, security and stability in the Middle East region;
- Report of the Follow-up and Action Committee on the outcome of the Summit;
- Report of the Secretary-General on joint Arab action;
- Development of the system of joint Arab action;
- Support for the Somali Republic.

Taking into account the grave situation of the Arab nation, national commitments and the particular importance of the questions mentioned above, and considering the fact that the leaders are aware of the urgent need to strengthen Arab solidarity, to establish it on a solid foundation and to ensure that at a practical level it serves to protect the higher interests of the nation and to realize its just demands, the Council has adopted the following resolutions:

The serious threats to Iraq and the dangers to the Arab States, the possibility that the situation might lead to a military conflict and the grave repercussions that this would have for the region and for the peace of the Arab nation

The Council of the League of Arab States, meeting at the summit level,

1. Having discussed the grave developments in the Iraq crisis,

2. Reaffirming resolution 227 adopted at its Beirut Summit in 2002, in which it categorically rejected an attack on Iraq or a threat against the security and integrity of any Arab State,

3. Reiterating its satisfaction at the assurances given by the Syrian Arab Republic, the Arab member of the Security Council, concerning resolution 1441 (2002), the fact that the aforesaid resolution does not constitute a pretext for waging war on Iraq and the fact that the resolution does not provide for automatic recourse

to military action, thereby expressing the Arab position of support for the international legitimacy represented by the Security Council and its mission of investigating weapons of mass destruction in Iraq,

4. Welcoming again with satisfaction the fact that the Iraqi Government agreed to the return of inspectors, is guaranteeing their complete freedom of movement and is giving them the means to perform the mission entrusted to them by the Security Council as effectively and objectively as possible,

5. Praising international positions opposed to the use of force against Iraq, believing that war would seriously undermine stability in the region and throughout the world,

6. Taking into consideration the many diplomatic contacts pursued by the Arab States with States members of the Security Council, internationally and with the Republic of Iraq in an effort to avoid a war in the region and ensure maximum cooperation with the inspection process, pursuant to Security Council resolution 1441 (2002),

7. Taking note of the reports presented to the Security Council by the chiefs of the two inspection teams on weapons of mass destruction, particularly the reports presented on 14 February 2003, which described the progress achieved with regard to Iraq's cooperation with the inspectors,

8. Taking into account the Security Council's responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, believing that the Council must play its role in dealing with the Iraq crisis in all its aspects by implementing its relevant resolutions, preserving the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Iraq and lifting the sanctions against Iraq,

9. Taking into account the great dangers and adverse consequences that would accompany any military action against Iraq and its people, as well as attempts by Israel to occupy the country in order to carry out its plans to empty the occupied Palestinian territories of their inhabitants and replace them with Israeli settlements, thereby compounding the suffering of the Palestinian people,

Decides:

1. To emphasize its categorical rejection of a strike against Iraq or a threat to the security and integrity of any Arab country, believing that this poses a threat to the security of the Arab nation, and to underscore the need to resolve the Iraq crisis peacefully, within the framework of international legitimacy;

2. To call upon all countries to support Arab efforts to avoid a war by ensuring that Iraq implements Security Council resolution 1441 (2002) fully;

3. To request that the inspection teams be given sufficient time to complete their mission in Iraq and to ask them to continue to perform their mission objectively;

4. To emphasize the Security Council's responsibility for ensuring that Iraq and its people are not attacked and for preserving Iraq's independence and territorial integrity, and to underscore the need to guarantee the security, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq's neighbours;

5. To affirm that its member States will refrain from participating in any military action against the security and territorial integrity and unity of Iraq or any other Arab country;

6. To express again its solidarity with the long-suffering Iraqi people and to state that the time has come to lift the embargo against Iraq, within the framework of the implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions, particularly resolution 687 (1991);

7. That the Kingdom of Bahrain will set up a presidential committee in cooperation with the member States, to also include the outgoing President, the incoming President and the Secretary-General of the Arab League, as well as any other States that wish to join. This committee will be responsible for making contact with the international parties concerned and explaining the Arab position, particularly to the permanent members of the Security Council, and for consulting with the Iraqi Government, in the context of the Arab League Summit resolutions on Iraq, on ways to tackle the serious challenges confronting Iraq and the dangers and risks threatening the Arab countries;

8. To emphasize that the affairs of the Arab nation and the development of its regimes are decided by the peoples of the region, based on their national and State interests and free from any outside interference; in this context, the Arab leaders denounce attempts to impose change on the region or interfere in its internal affairs, without regard for its own interests and problems;

9. To view the elimination of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq as part of the process of eliminating weapons of mass destruction in the region, including Israel, in accordance with paragraph 14 of Security Council resolution 687 (1991);

10. To continue to follow closely the evolution of the question of Iraq.

The situation between Iraq and Kuwait

The Council of the League of Arab States, meeting at the summit level,

Having considered resolution 227 adopted at its Beirut Summit in 2002,

Decides:

1. To recall the assurances given by the Republic of Iraq at the Beirut Summit that it would respect the independence, sovereignty and security of the State of Kuwait and guarantee its territorial integrity and unity within internationally recognized borders, to emphasize the need for this commitment to be respected in order to avoid any possibility of a repetition of the events of 1990 and to urge the adoption of policies that will make it possible to achieve this goal in a climate of goodwill and good-neighbourly relations. In this regard, the Summit draws Arab leaders' attention to the importance of halting hostile press campaigns and statements, so as to create a positive atmosphere that will assure the two countries that the principles of good-neighbourliness and non-interference in internal affairs are being respected;

2. To urge resumption of the work of the Technical Subcommittee of the Tripartite Commission responsible for questions relating to Kuwaiti nationals held prisoner or hostage since 1990 and 1991, which was reactivated on 8 January 2003, and to commend Kuwait's positive response to all the information provided by Iraq through the International Committee of the Red Cross concerning missing Kuwaiti nationals. The Council hopes that decisive, significant progress will be made in this area. The Council also welcomes the return by Iraq of part of the Kuwaiti archives

and calls on Iraq to return the remaining archives and other property of the Kuwaiti State.

The Arab-Israeli conflict, the evolution of the Palestinian question, intensified Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people and its impact on peace and security in the Middle East region

The Council of the League of Arab States, meeting at the summit level,

1. Deeply concerned at the grave situation facing the Palestinian people and their national authorities as a result of the continuing and escalating Israeli aggression, which has claimed a large number of victims and caused heavy losses to the Palestinian national economy,

2. Reaffirming its complete solidarity with the Palestinian people in their struggle to regain their legitimate rights and its unequivocal support for their committed struggle for these rights,

3. Also reaffirming its earlier resolutions on support for the Palestinian economy,

Decides:

1. To pay a resounding tribute to the Palestinian people and their legitimate national leadership, headed by President Yasser Arafat, for their tenacious resistance against the continuing and escalating Israeli aggression that violates the rights of this people and seeks to destroy their capacities, sacred places and national leadership, and to reaffirm its determination to continue to provide all forms of political, moral and material support for the Palestinian people, their heroic intifada and their legitimate struggle against occupation;

2. To consider that the all-out and premeditated aggression by Israel against the Palestinian people, their authorities and their national institutions is aimed at bringing the peace process in the Middle East to a definitive halt and to hold Israel solely responsible for this policy;

3. To reaffirm the legitimate right of the Palestinian people to resist the occupation of their land by Israel and to take action within the framework of respect for international legality and of the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and Security Council of the United Nations to defend themselves against the aggressive practices of the occupation forces, manifested in their policies of colonization and the blockading and reoccupation of cities, villages and refugee camps, without mentioning assassinations, arrests, the destruction of infrastructure, homes, religious institutions and medical centres and attacks on international organizations working in the humanitarian field;

4. To take steps to put an end to the aggression of which the Palestinian people are victims, to ensure international protection for Palestinian civilians through the dispatch of an international protection force to oblige Israel to respect the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention and to request the Secretary-General of the United Nations to make arrangements for the early dispatch to the area of a team to investigate Israeli crimes and identify their authors with a view to bringing them to international justice;

5. To reaffirm the Arab identity of Jerusalem and the rejection of all attempts by Israel to Judaize the city, to consider all the acts and practices engaged in by Israel, as the occupying Power, null and void and in violation of the resolutions that express international legality, to also consider the establishment of settlements in Jerusalem and other parts of the Palestinian territory as a danger that threatens the peace and security of the region, and to reaffirm the support of Arabs for this heroic city;

6. To condemn the rejection by Israel of all initiatives and proposals for a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East currently being put forward by various international parties and groups;

7. To reaffirm the commitment of Arab States to the Arab peace initiative put forward at the 2002 Beirut Summit that sets out the bases for a just and comprehensive peace settlement in the region and to hold Israel responsible for the failure of peace efforts;

8. To urge the international Quartet to resume its efforts to bring peace to the Middle East and to find a just and comprehensive solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict based on the Arab peace initiative;

9. To reiterate its earlier resolutions, in which it expressed its commitment to a just and comprehensive peace as an objective and a strategic choice to be achieved through the implementation at all levels of decisions expressing international legality, in accordance with the resolutions of the Security Council and, in particular, resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978), and with resolution 194 (III) of the General Assembly, and to stress the need to take as the point of departure the Madrid Peace Conference and the principle of "land for peace". The Council also stresses that the achievement of this objective requires the complete withdrawal of Israel from all of the Arab territories that it occupies, including the Syrian Arab Golan, back to the lines of 4 June 1967, and from the Lebanese territory still under occupation, including the Shab`a farms area, an end to the occupation of Palestinian lands, and the exercise by the Palestinian people of all of their inalienable rights, including their right to self-determination and to the establishment of an independent State on all of their national territory with Jerusalem as its capital, the guarantee of the right of return for Palestinian refugees and the release of Palestinians who have been abducted or arrested and are now in Israeli prisons;

10. To charge the Committee on the Arab Peace Initiative with pursuing and intensifying Arab efforts at the international level and to make the necessary preparations for bringing the question before the Security Council so that this organ can assume its full responsibility in the face of the grave situation existing in the Palestinian territories and its consequences for peace and stability in the region and the world;

11. To reiterate the firm commitment of Arabs to provide financial support for the budget of the Palestinian National Authority for the next six months beginning 1 April 2003 and to automatically renew this assistance under the arrangements established at the Beirut Summit for as long as the Israeli aggression continues, to invite the member States of the Arab League that have not yet done so to make the remainder of their contributions to the budget of the Palestinian

National Authority and to the Al-Aqsa Fund and the Al-Quds Intifadah Fund, in accordance with the decisions of the Beirut Summit;

12. To charge the General Secretariat with continuing its efforts to collect donations from Arab populations in support of the resistance of the Palestinian people and to continue to cooperate with the competent international organizations providing support for the process of development and reconstruction in the Palestinian territories.

Report of the Follow-up and Action Committee on the outcome of the Summit

The Council of the League of Arab States meeting, at the summit level,

Having received the report of the Follow-up and Action Committee and the recommendations it contains,

1. Takes note with satisfaction of the work of the Follow-up and Action Committee and thanks its Chairman and members as well as the Secretary-General for the considerable efforts they have made to ensure the follow-up and implementation of the resolutions of the 2002 Beirut Summit;

2. Requests the Chairman of the Summit (the Kingdom of Bahrain) to hold consultations with Arab leaders and the Secretary-General with a view to reaching an agreement on the composition of the Committee;

3. Charges the Council of Ministers of the League of Arab States with studying, at its next session (119th), the final text of the draft document on the mechanisms and working methods of the Follow-up and Action Committee, which is annexed hereto, and to publish the draft text;

4. Invites the Committee to submit periodic reports on its activities and recommendations to the Chairman of the Summit with a view to their presentation to the next Arab summit.

Report of the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States on joint Arab action

The Council of the League of Arab States, meeting at the summit level,

Having received the report of the Secretary-General on the various areas of joint Arab action, including the development and modernization of the system of joint Arab action,

1. Takes note with satisfaction of the report of the Secretary-General on joint Arab action, including the development and modernization of the Arab League system and efforts to ensure that all its institutions are able to respond to national imperatives, and decides to follow developments in the regional and international situation;

2. Notes with appreciation the measures taken by the Secretary-General to implement the Summit resolutions and invites him to continue his efforts in this area.

Support for the Somali Republic

The Council of the League of Arab States, meeting at the summit level,

Having received the report of the Follow-up and Action Committee on the outcome of the Summit and the report of the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States on joint Arab action,

Reiterating its previous resolutions concerning solidarity with Somalia,

1. Reaffirms the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Somali Republic and rejects any interference in its internal affairs, welcomes the request of the Transitional National Government of Somalia that the League of Arab States should assist in improving security and in the maintenance of peace in Somalia, particularly in Mogadishu, and in promoting the process of national reconciliation in Somalia currently taking place in Kenya;

2. Invites the Somali factions to put the interests of their country above all considerations and to return to a common path to resolve conflicts, and urges all parties to observe the ceasefire agreement and to accelerate their efforts to arrive at a political settlement of the Somali crisis that would preserve the country's unity and territorial integrity and permit Somalis to begin the reconstruction of their country and the creation of national institutions;

3. Supports the Somali reconciliation conference, under the auspices of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the chairmanship of Kenya, as a means of achieving a comprehensive and lasting settlement of the Somali crisis;

4. Requests the Secretary-General to continue his contacts with a view to establishing an international committee at the regional level made up of representatives of all the States and international and regional organizations concerned with the Somali crisis in order to avoid inconsistencies and duplication of work and to enable the Somalis to keep their promises and commitments;

5. Invites the United Nations, the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the group of Sahel and Saharan States, acting in cooperation with the League of Arab States, to establish an emergency programme to restore security and stability in Somalia by disarming the militias and integrating them into the institutions of the Somali State and society;

6. Thanks those member States that have provided support to Somalia directly or through the League of Arab States and invites those that have not yet done so to make their financial contributions as soon as possible to the assistance fund for Somalia, in accordance with the decision taken at the 2002 Beirut Summit;

7. Invites the Ministerial Committee on Somalia and the Secretary-General to continue their efforts to promote reconciliation and unity in Somalia.

Appreciation and acknowledgements to the Kingdom of Bahrain for its chairmanship of the fifteenth regular session, at the summit level, of the Council of the League of Arab States

The Council of the League of Arab States, meeting at the summit level,

In recognition of the exemplary performance of His Royal Highness, Hamad Bin Isa Al-Khalifa, King of Bahrain, as chairman of the fifteenth regular session, at the summit level, of the Council of the League of Arab States,

Commends His Royal Highness for the wisdom with which he presided over the work of the session, which was a major factor in the success of the Summit and the achievement of important results that are likely to strengthen the process of joint Arab action and to promote the continued security of the Arab nation.

Appreciation and acknowledgements to the Arab Republic of Egypt for hosting the fifteenth regular session, at the summit level, of the Council of the League of Arab States at Sharm el-Sheikh

The Council of the League of Arab States, meeting at the summit level,

Acknowledging the generous hospitality with which the Arab Republic of Egypt hosted the work of the fifteenth regular session, at the summit level, of the Council of the League of Arab States and its commendable efforts in organizing the work of the session,

1. Extends its warmest greetings and expresses its appreciation to the President, Government and people of Egypt for the warm and hospitable welcome they extended to the delegations which participated in the Arab Summit;

2. Expresses its appreciation to His Excellency President Mohamed Hosni Mubarak for his unstinting efforts to ensure the successful convening of the Summit.

Date and place of the sixteenth regular session, at the summit level, of the Council of the League of Arab States

The Council of the League of Arab States, meeting at the summit level,

Based on the provisions governing the chairmanship of the session, at the summit level, of the Council of the League of Arab States contained in the special agreement on the holding of regular sessions,

Decides:

That the sixteenth regular session, at the summit level, of the Council of the League of Arab States will be held under the chairmanship of Tunisia in March 2004.